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ABSTRACT

California's approach to training regular education teachers to deal with mainstreamed handicapped students as mandated by P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, is described. Training focuses on preservice education and the state's development of competencies regarding exceptional students for teachers and administrators. Implementation considerations of the teaching skill regulations are noted for institutions of higher education and the State Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing. A series of workshops on the teaching skills is described. Alternative models--the intrinsic, core component, restructure, transdisciplinary, inservice, and student teaching models--are briefly described. (CL)

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DEVELOPING SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES IN REGULAR EDUCATORS: CALIFORNIA'S PLAN

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ABSTRACT

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California's mandate for the Professional Education of Professional Educators was implemented on July 1, 1979. Specific knowledge and skill areas as well as Staff Development procedures and various models of implementation at a Pre-Service and In-Service level have been developed. The impact of these programs on Teacher Education is discussed.

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The United States Congress in 1975, after much prodding by both professionals and interested parents and public, passed Public Law 94-142 - The Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law provides a free and appropriate education for all handicapped children. It has become known as the "Bill of Rights For The Handicapped." It is one of the most substantial pieces of legislation ever passed in the area of education of handicapped children and youth. The goal of P.L. 94-142 is to provide a free and appropriate education to all handicapped children. Further, each individual with exceptional needs will be educated in the least restrictive environment based on his/her individual needs. Priorities of P.L. 94-142 are to serve the unserved first, then serve the inadequately or inappropriately served, and finally to train school personnel in order to effectively meet the needs of exceptional children. Under this law each individual with exceptional needs is guaranteed a culturally unbiased assessment that leads to an Individual Educational Plan (known as an I.E.P.) Corrigan (1978) points out that "American schools must be based now on the principle of "no rejects", every human being has a right to an education and the right to be treated as a person - not an object, or a symbol on a chart, or a category in a student grouping structure. The labeling and classification of children, and the social stigma that this labeling pro-

duces, must be eliminated".

This law was effective in the State of California as of October 1, 1977. The legislative intent is to provide quality educational opportunities for handicapped individuals and the bill is written to provide both special educational instruction and special education related services. Special Education, under this bill, is defined as specially designed instruction at no cost to parents or guardians, to meet the needs of the handicapped child, including classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. Related services under this bill includes transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services, including speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, and medical and counseling services. Such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only.

This powerful act has meant that for the first time a great many handicapped children and youth will be receiving services in public schools. It also means that under the term "least restrictive environment" many of the handicapped children presently served in self-contained classrooms will now be mainstreamed into regular education classes. The real focus of P.L. 94-142 is to effect the return in integration of the handicapped into the mainstream of regular education. This action, the "Mainstreaming Movement", has caused a great deal of concern among regular and special educators. The focus of concern is on the process involved in interpretation.

The implementation of this act depends on essentially one basic issue. This issue is the training of personnel to provide services in educational settings to assist handicapped children. Corrigan (1978) discussed implications for teacher education. He proposes that "Until educators get rid of

the special education-regular education dualism in teacher education institutions, public schools will continue to mirror the same dualism. ALL teachers must be prepared to implement P.L. 94-142. Hence, we must reform all aspects of teacher education, not just special education departments." This training must necessarily be divided into two elements which include first in-service training or the training of regular educational professionals, and secondly to provide pre-service training for the future.

The State of California is currently providing such training through an elaborate network of services developed in the State Department of Education under the aegis of the Office of Special Education. This training includes not only direct training of teachers in their schools but also a series of Child Development Service Centers which act both as demonstration centers and training centers for regular classroom teachers.

Pre-Service Training

Ultimately, the problem of training is really pre-service training for the future. In order for P.L. 94-142 to totally become effective, it is necessary to develop a whole new breed of educators. Both regular educators and special educators must be knowledgeable in the kinds of education programs that can be best developed for handicapped children and youth. They must be competent in delivering services to handicapped children and youth in combined programs of regular education and special education services. Reynolds (1978) suggested that "A major renegotiation of relations between special and regular education is occuring. Children are crossing old boundaries between special and regular education more often and more easily. Teachers are collaborating more frequently, but much training and retraining are needed." Pre-service training, then, simply means training of teachers before they move into positions

of responsibility as deliverers of services to children in schools.

In late 1977, Governor Brown signed into law Assembly Bill 1250 (an extension of Assembly Bill 4040), better known as the special education "Master Plan" for California's implementation of P.L. 94-142.

Effective July 1, 1979, all teachers recommended for a permanent Multiple Subject or Single Subject Credential or Administrative Services Credential must have demonstrated special skills and knowledge about handicapped children. This new regulation, which is part of the Master Plan in Special Education in the State of California, seeks to insure that mainstreaming efforts in the delivery of services will improve in the future for all handicapped children. Just what is the impact of such a ruling? The impact is that a system must be developed to provide regular educators and administrators with special skills and competencies to meet the needs of mainstreamed handicapped children. At the same time, implicit in such legislation is that persons who do receive these skills and knowledge will also receive some type of hands-on field experiences with exceptional children. This sharing of the theoretical and the practical experience becomes, therefore, a necessity for pre-service training.

In January, 1978, staff from the Office of Special Education and the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing developed the competency requisites for teachers and administrators in order to meet the intent of the statute. A survey of other states yielded limited information. A review of the literature focused more on the necessity for this type of training rather than presenting adaptable models for training.

A preliminary set of competencies was generated based on experiences with mainstreaming, borrowing from the generic competencies for the current special education credential, and what had been learned from lectures, conferences and talking with teachers and administrators piloting the Master Plan under Assembly Bill 4040. (See Table I and Table 2).

TABLE 1

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR CLEAR TEACHING CREDENTIAL

1. Recognize children's academic strengths and weaknesses, perceptual characteristics and preferred learning modalities (i.e., auditory, visual, kinesthetic) through formal and informal assessment procedures appropriate for classroom teachers to administer;
2. Be able to assess the characteristics and behavior of exceptional pupils in terms of programs and developmental needs;
3. Recognize the differences and similarities of exceptional and non-exceptional pupils;
4. Analyze non-discriminatory assessment including a sensitivity to cultural and linguistic factors;
5. Produce and evaluate short- and long-term educational objectives for regular classroom aspects of the Individualized Education Program goals;
6. Utilize various diagnostic/prescriptive materials and procedures in reading, language arts, math and perceptual-motor development, when appropriate;
7. Apply diagnostic information toward the modification of traditional school curriculum and materials for selected children;
8. Identify and teach non-academic areas, i.e., socialization skills, career and vocational education;
9. Promote pupil growth in the affective domain and in interpersonal relationships;
10. Be able to communicate appropriate information in a positive manner to other professionals and to parents;
11. Understand current legislation dealing with Special Education, including the concept of least restrictive environment, and due process for parents and teachers.

The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing also approved a group of skills and knowledges which must be developed in order to obtain the Administrative Services Credential. (See Table 2).

TABLE 2

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CREDENTIAL

1. Be able to assess the characteristics and behavior of exceptional pupils in terms of program and developmental needs;
2. Recognize the differences and similarities of exceptional and non-exceptional pupils;
3. Analyze non-discriminatory assessment including a sensitivity to cultural and linguistic factors;
4. Discuss interpersonal relationships and human relations problems and issues with students and parents;
5. Communicate information in a positive manner to teachers and parents;
6. Evaluate the concept of least restrictive environment and its implications for the instructional process;
7. Define and explain the admission, review, and dismissal processes of Special Education legislation;
8. Formulate and illustrate an Individualized Educational Program in consultation with the appropriate support personnel and parents for individuals with exceptional needs;
9. Identify and select alternative instructional programs;
10. Contrast and explain individual protections of Special Education legislation as they pertain to parents, teachers and students;
11. Apply diagnostic information toward the modification of traditional school curriculum and materials for selected children.

The initial draft of competencies was sent to 500 school districts, 58 county departments of education, most of the professional and lay organizations of teachers, administrators and parents, and 72 institutions of higher education. The questionnaire instructed the respondent to rank each competency on a 1 to 5 scale using a column for teachers and a separate column for administrators. They were asked to revise, delete or add competencies where appropriate. In addition, a box was provided for them to indicate their position within the district so we could match position with response.

In the nine years the Commission has been in existence, it has never received such an outstanding return of questionnaires. A total of 367 completed forms were returned. In several instances the entire faculty of a school had participated in the completion of a single questionnaire. The greatest return from a single group was the site administrator at 135. A substantial number of their returns indicated an urgent need and desire to be fully informed of the new special education legislation and subsequent California Administrative Code and Title 5 regulations.

By May, 1978, the competencies were rewritten and divided into two lists, Educators and Administrators. They were sent to the Programs Committee of the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing for their review. The Committee made further modification such as: adding knowledge of vocational and career education for the handicapped, knowledge of non-discriminatory assessment (non-biased), and specific terminology used in P.L. 94-142 and Assembly Bill 1250.

The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing directed staff in June, 1978 to draft California Administrative Code and Title 5 Regulations for these competencies and guidelines for program approval and send them to the field for review and establish a time for a public hearing. At the September public hearing, both favorable and negative testimony was heard. The major concern stated by several witnesses was that the regulations appear to be requiring "everyone to become a specialist in special education." After considerable and thoughtful discussion among the Commissioners, they decided not to accept the proposed regulations.

The regulations were returned to staff to scale down the level of specificity and, hopefully, reduce the anxiety expressed by several at the public hearing. It was also concluded by the Commission that the use of the word competency should be replaced by knowledge and skills, which seemed to be more descriptive and acceptable.

After two more lengthy discussions by the entire Commission, the regulations for implementing Section 67.5 of Assembly Bill 1250 were adopted by the Commission in October. With the State Board of Education in November, eleven arduous months of labor had finally become a reality. The adoption of the regulations was applauded by many, but questioned by others in terms of their actual fulfillment. Often heard questions were: How is an institution supposed to develop and have in place the offerings to meet this requirement by July 1, 1979? How does a large state university with strong special education and general education departments distribute this sudden windfall of FTE? How will a private institution attract and maintain current enrollments when this requirement could conceivably add another $500 to $1000 for tuition costs? Finally, how can an institution currently operating on a shoestring muster the resources to meet another mandate from Sacramento without the concurrent funds for development and implementation?

Development of Plans

Two different groups, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing (CTPL) must be concerned with implementation of these regulations. Each IHE must implement a plan or a model whereby regular educators and administrators will receive the training necessary to develop the skills and knowledges approved by the CTPL.

The normal procedure of the Commission is to have individual consultants from the CTPL assigned to institutions of higher education. Such consultants normally meet with the faculties concerned at each institution and develop cooperatively with the institutions approved programs of training. This new regulation, however, presented certain problems for the Commission staff. First, there was the problem of the time restriction. The time restriction was that the

program must be instituted and be operative no later than July 1, 1979. In addition, there had to be developed some type of uniformity of explanations for all of the personnel in various institutions throughout the state. Since California has 72 colleges and universities, information must be shared with them all most expeditiously. This meant that a different approach would have to be used in order to meet collectively with university personnel. Personnel must include administrators of institutions of higher education, professors in the departments of teacher education, special education and administrative services. Further, consultants from the Commission office charged with the responsibility of carrying out such programs must also be involved.

Members of the staff of the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing developed a series of workshops across the State of California. These workshops would be one-day workshops, located in geographically central areas so that various training programs in that area would be able to easily attend a one-day workshop sponsored by the CTPL on content of the skills and knowledges and how various models could be utilized to effectively implement this ruling.

The purpose of the workshops was to assist colleges and universities in their development of appropriate programs designed to meet the special skills and knowledges. Concomitant with this purpose was the concept that each training institution should do so with a realistic appraisal of their own capabilities and resources. Such workshop procedure acted, then, as an effective approach in helping to dispel various rumors and misunderstandings about this entire procedure.

Workshops were held statewide in the fall of 1978. The first regional workshop had as its intent the provision of more thorough and comprehensive consultant services regarding the development of special skills and knowledges. Letters were sent to deans and directors of teacher education at selected institutions. Also invited to the meetings were the coordinators of Multiple

Subject and Single Subject programs and Administrative Services programs. Ultimately, those who attended included those persons who were primarily involved in the training of regular educators, persons involved in the training of special educators, persons involved in the training of both regular and special education program administrators, and a variety of university administrative deans and other officials. The state-wide response included 63 of the invited 72 institutions.

Under the direction of the Commission, working cooperatively with several regular and special educators from various places throughout the State, the Commission staff developed the "Institutional Workshops on AB 1250 and ACR 73." The staff of each workshop consisted of members of the staff of the CTPL, selected representatives from various college and university special education training programs, and representatives of in-service training programs from the California State Department of Education responsible for the implementation of P.L. 94-142. Programs of the workshops were oriented toward the following general areas:

a) Presentation of the History, Development, and Implementation of the Special Guidelines;

b) Planning for Alternative Programs;

c) Local Education Involvement, State Department of Education Personnel Involvement, and In-Service Programs;

d) Approval procedures for the IHE Plans to Meet the Commission Regulations.

Program Alternatives

The program alternatives section was presented by several special educators who have already been involved in developing selected approaches for special

education competencies for regular educators. Several small group work sessions were held in each of these workshops and covered a variety of topics. Such topics included "Adding Modules to Existing Professional Programs," "Refocusing Coursework and Student Teaching Experiences," "Options with University of California Extension Programs" and other similar topics. In each of these small work sessions a variety of program models were shared with the participants. Specific questions dealing with the content, course scheduling, administrative procedures, and other concerns of participants were shared with the staff of the workshop. All of the workshops also included presentations from the staff of the State Department of Education's Delivery System for Implementing P.L. 94-142.

At the completion of the first regional workshop, evaluations indicated the workshop, presenters and materials were effective in assisting participating IHE's in developing appropriate programs and models of training.

Models of Implementation

As a result of the statewide staff development workshops on AB 1250, institutions of higher education have presented their respective plans for implementation. The various plans evolved from deliberations with educational administration, elementary, secondary and special education programs. In most cases, special education departments served as the pivotal point for clarification, problem-solving, delineating subordinate competencies from the state knowledge and skill areas, and proposing service delivery models consistent with the articulated needs of the students as translated by the departments. Unique aspects of each institution are reflected in the four models presented.

Intrinsic Model

The intrinsic approach incorporates the state knowledge and skills into the existing program at a particular institution. Major responsibilities are assigned

to each program element. Thereby is created an interweaving of competencies that develop into a strand throughout the coursework sequence. The procedures to actualize the intrinsic model include:

1. The revision of existing coursework in elementary, secondary and educational administration to include, address and monitor the knowledge and skill areas;
2. Providing of a single course for incoming students who will have yet to fulfill these knowledges;
3. Designing a field-based component to provide a check-out for students, soon to be in the field. Informal and formal competency assessments will be conducted in conjunction with cooperating classroom teachers, student teachers and university supervisors.

Within the intrinsic model, primary and supportive responsibilities are assigned to courses targeted for inclusion of the state knowledge and skill areas.

Core Component Model

This approach to implementation channels students to a core course that is designed to instill the knowledge and skill areas. Major responsibility for this course may rest with the departments of special education. Variations included intern teaching, so that numerous members of a faculty will provide expertise to special competencies and team teaching where regular education, special education, and educational administration are involved in pre-servicing students while concurrently in-servicing each other.

Restructure Model

Many institutions of higher education have approached the implementation of the California state mandate through a restructure of existing coursework. This

restructuring includes the development of modules or discretely developed materials that could be encompassed into regular education pre-service and/or in-service curricula. A more skill based restructuring includes the demonstration of knowledge within the student teaching placement. Providing structured classroom experience with exceptional children and youth in the regular classroom, extrapolates well to students' prospective teaching positions. Complementary experiences with exceptional individuals can also be provided for self-contained and resource room sites.

Transdisciplinary Model

Within this approach are subsumed many of the other approaches. As the core components are formalized, leadership roles for discussing the topic areas are established. Major topic responsibilities are then aligned with areas of expertise and of the respective faculty member. Supportive faculty would then, not only provide complementary information relating to their areas of specialization in education, but would also provide supplemental knowledge pertaining to the state knowledge and skill areas.

Specific learning activities developed for students is then translated into learning activities for supportive faculty. Thus this model not only impacts students' understanding of the interface between special education and regular education professionals, but also serves as a vehicle for in-service for faculty of institutions of higher education and school district personnel. Additionally, this model might well serve as the change agent for institutions of higher education to facilitate communication between educators and provide a model for students.

Inservice Model

In an attempt to place pre-service and in-service endeavors in concert with the California mandate. Universities and colleges have proposed knowledge and skill attainment within an in-service arrangement. Typically, a university

consultant, or supervisor from the department of special education visits regular classrooms where individuals with exceptional needs have been mainstreamed. Within the context then of the least restrictive environment, the regular educator is provided with skills in formal and informal diagnostics, developing annual goals and short-term objectives, behavior management, vocational and social skills and curricular modifications. Parent-professoral, professional-professoral communication is modeled within the school milieu. This type of active learning in a natural environment for educator and student has been demonstrated to be the most well-received and most effective.

Student Teaching Model

As an extension of the in-service model, the Student-Teaching Model embodies the concepts of the natural and logical context for instilling knowledge and skills. The point of departure in this model is that the student teacher, first will have had university course, lecture, and/or seminar preparation, second, the classroom experience with mainstreamed students supplements university work, and third, supervision of the student teaching in regular education is in conjunction with the supervisor from special education.

In essence all models, particularly those involving on-site demonstration of skills and direct supervision, have as its indirect goal the re-education of the regular educator supervisor.

On-Going Revisions

All models are implemented, ongoing evaluation, feedback, and revisions are occuring so that the complexion of many of the models has changed. The refinements have facilitated the transition of special educators educating all educators involved in pre- and in-service to the gradual "mainstreaming" of regular educators and administrators in the professional education of their professionals in special education knowledge and skills.

Essentially, these workshops and models have as their goal the training of a cadre of educators who will improve both the delivery of services and its quality in the years to come for all children. Whether this will be done will depend on how effectively these models meet this goal. As of December, 1979, 63 IHE's have CTPL approved programs. In a span of one year, through the efforts of many, institutions and personnel committed to this legislation have worked together so that the intent of the legislation will be implemented to the maximum possible extent.

Speaking of this type of implementation, Howsam, Corrigan, Denemark and Nash wrote, "The members of this Commission recognize the forces which stand in the way of change. We are, however, convinced that the time is right for an all-out effort. What is needed is a catalytic element capable of starting the release of the tremendous energies necessary for action." (1976)

The "catalytic element" for California has been and continues to be the Professional education of its Educators and Administrators in Special Education Skills.

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